MARCH 2011

REFORM & RENEW

Strategies for Building a 21st Century Transportation System

32nd Annual Report to Congress

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Planning, financing and coordinating transportation for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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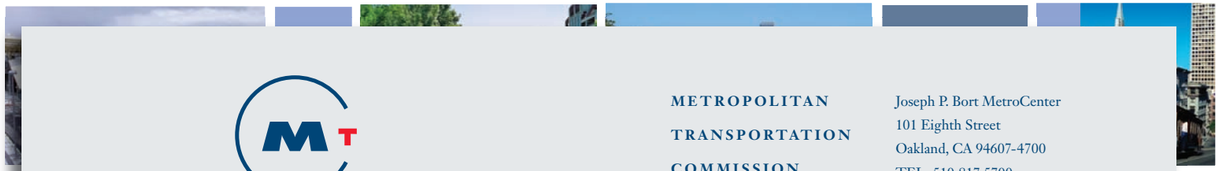

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March 2011

To Our Federal Representatives:

The Obama Administration's fiscal year 2012 budget proposal outlines a major restructuring of the federal transportation program, squarely asking Congress to take up multi-year surface transportation authorization this year. MTC urges you to do so and to raise user fees to match the funding levels proposed by the President.

The Obama Administration's proposal for authorization is on target in the following respects:

- It greatly increases federal investment in transportation
- It simplifies programs and increases flexibility
- It places a greater priority on restoring our existing transportation system to a state of good repair

However, the proposal contains a glaring omission — it lacks a program focused on the economic engines of America, the metropolitan areas where the vast majority of America's jobs are located and as a result, the source of our greatest transportation challenges.

By investing in metropolitan areas and holding such areas accountable for achieving specific performance measures, Congress can let each metropolitan area determine its own top priorities for mobility, whether it be restoring an aging rail system to a safe state of good repair, or building a dedicated truck-only lane to improve safety and speed up the flow of goods.

In 2010, amidst a prolonged recession, voters in metropolitan areas across America stepped up to invest in transportation, approving 44 out of 57 new transportation tax measures — a 77 percent success rate. Congress should reward and *encourage* this commitment to "self-help" through a stronger partnership with the nation's metropolitan areas. The 65 percent of U.S. citizens who reside in metropolitan areas with a population over 1 million deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Tissier
Chair

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21ST CENTURY INFRASTRUCTURE: THE KEY TO RESTORING AMERICA'S COMPETITIVE EDGE

MTC joins President Obama and key Congressional leaders in supporting greater investment in our nation's transportation infrastructure. As a nation, we have invested trillions of dollars in building an intricate network of roads, railroads, transit systems, seaports and airports that collectively constitute our national transportation system. Yet, in the last several decades we have fallen behind and allowed our infrastructure to deteriorate to unacceptable levels.

Congress can help reverse this trend. Simply by restoring the user fee principle that has long been the hallmark of the federal transportation program, Congress can increase infrastructure spending while reducing the nation's deficit. See page 10 for further discussion of how to go about this.

In the Bay Area, where two-thirds of our transportation funding is generated locally and regionally, we face a $40 billion shortfall over the next 25 years for transit capital replacement and roadway maintenance, as shown in the table below.

Nationwide, $79 billion per year is needed just to preserve the highway system in its current condition, while more than $132 billion is needed to improve conditions, according to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT). This is over three times the current funding levels.

Funding Shortfalls in the San Francisco Bay Area
(in billions of year-of-expenditure $)

Maintenance	Total Need	Expected Funding Available	Shortfall
Local Streets and Roads	$34.5	$23.3	$11.2
Transit Capital Replacement	$40.3	$24.2	$16.1
State Highway Maintenance	$17.0	$4.0	$13.0
TOTAL	$91.8	$51.5	$40.3

Source: *Change in Motion: Transportation 2035 Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area*, MTC, 2009.

About one-third of the 42,500 local road miles in the Bay Area have pavement that is classified as "at risk," "poor" or "failed." To bring the entire system to a state of good repair would require boosting annual funding from $350 million to $1 billion through 2035.

American Society of Civil Engineers
2009 Report Card

Grade Point Average: D

Roads: D-

Bridges: C

Transit: D

Rail: C-

> "The third step in winning the future is rebuilding America. To attract new businesses to our shores, we need the fastest, most reliable ways to move people, goods, and information — from high-speed rail to high-speed internet."
>
> — Barack Obama
> 2011 State of the Union address

Bridge tolls paid by Bay Area drivers make up the majority of funding for the new East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

The national commitment to maintain our transportation system in a state of good repair should have the following elements:

- It should be performance-driven, cost-effective and multimodal.
- It should reward states, metropolitan areas and transit agencies that demonstrate progress in reducing maintenance backlogs.
- It should establish a ten-year target to restore the nation's surface transportation infrastructure to a state of good repair.

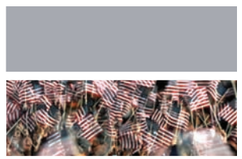
How to Get There From Here

- As a starting point, the bill should mandate that USDOT conduct a comprehensive assessment for bringing our federally significant transportation infrastructure into a state of good repair.
- In the interim period before the study is completed, funds should be allocated to states, metropolitan areas and transit agencies using need-based highway and transit formulas, with a requirement that a minimum level of funds be dedicated to restoring the transportation system to a state of good repair.

According to a 2009 study by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), one-third of the nation's major highways, including interstates, freeways and major roads, are in poor or mediocre condition. This makes for not just an unpleasant, and in some cases, unsafe ride for motorists; it also **adds an estimated $750 a year to the cost of operating a vehicle for motorists**.

For transit, USDOT estimates that an investment of almost $16 billion per year is needed to maintain current conditions, while $22 billion is needed to expand and improve performance, more than double the current federal funding levels. We can't possibly meet our environmental and sustainability goals if our transit systems are falling to pieces.







METROPOLITAN MOBILITY: SETTING GOALS, ACHIEVING RESULTS

We urge Congress to significantly strengthen the federal partnership with the American people by boosting transportation funding to the areas where most of us live, work and — more often than not — find ourselves stuck in traffic congestion: the metropolitan regions of America.

Investing a larger share of federal transportation funds in our metropolitan areas will focus on the key drivers of prosperity: high-value jobs, educated workers, and institutions of higher learning.

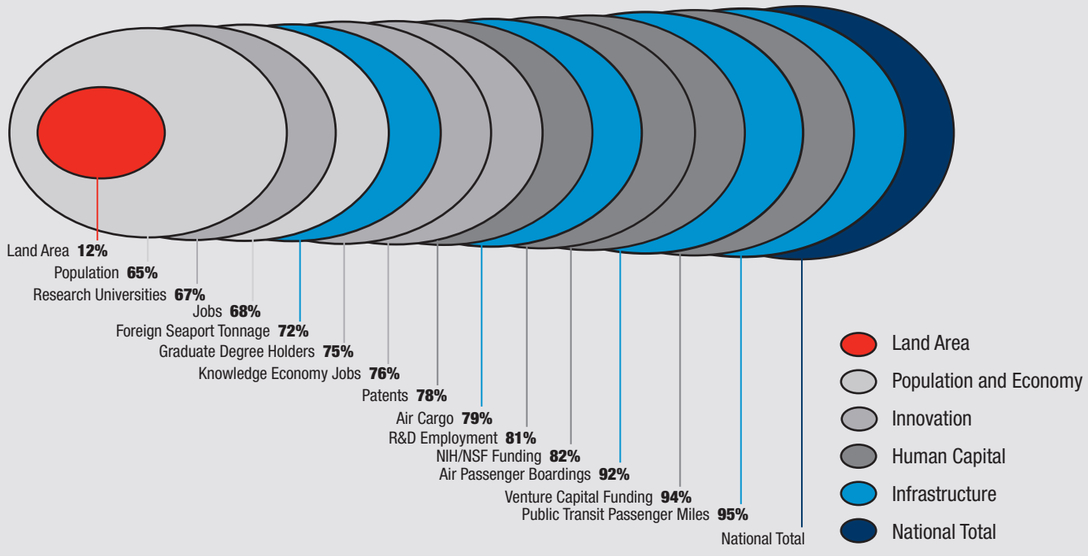
Simply put, funds invested in cost effective improvements to the transportation network in metropolitan areas generate substantial benefits by reducing congestion and boosting economic productivity.

In a global economy, America is competing with other nations to attract and retain the people and companies that will develop the technological innovations of tomorrow. Transportation investments can play a major role in this effort by improving the quality of life in our metropolitan areas, which in turn enhances their economic competitiveness. The benefits from enhanced investment in our metropolitan areas accrue not just to those areas, but to the nation as a whole.

We recommend development of a Metro Mobility Program that breaks out of the modally-based funding programs that dominate federal law today, and instead allows metro areas to determine for themselves the best way to achieve the performance objectives of the federal transportation program, whether through investment in transit, highway, freight, or bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Major Metros Contain the Fundamental Drivers of Prosperity — 65 Percent of the Nation's Population and 75 Percent of U.S. GDP

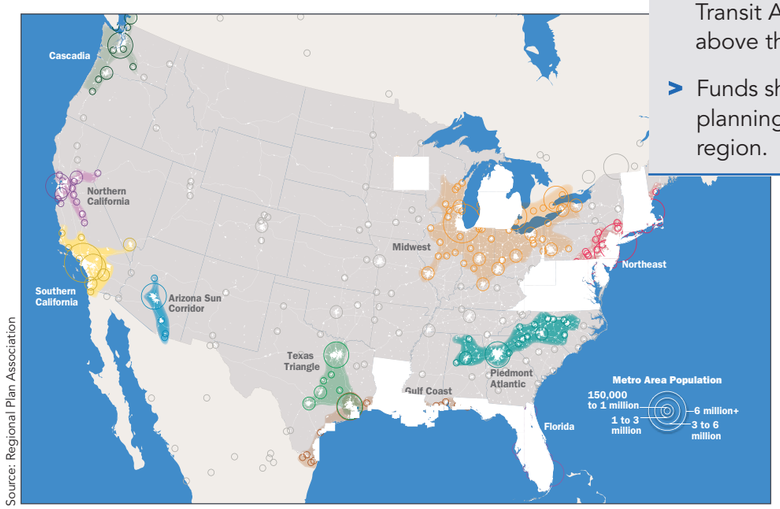
Percentage of National Activity in 100 Largest Metro Areas, Various Indicators, 2005



Source: *Blueprint for American Prosperity*, The Brookings Institution, 2007; www.brookings.edu/metro

Karl Nielsen

In the San Francisco Bay Area, nearly 1.4 million trips are taken on transit every weekday.



Source: Regional Plan Association

Emerging Mega-Regions Across The United States

Congress should create a Metro Mobility Program that:

- Provides accountability through performance objectives consistent with national goals for congestion relief, access to transit, air quality and climate change.
- Provides direct-funding allocation to major metro areas with a population of 1 million or more.
- Establishes flexible project eligibility to assure that the most effective projects are selected.
- Requires the same local match and project screening requirements regardless of the type of project.

How to Get There From Here

- Fund a national Metro Mobility Program by redirecting revenues that are now allocated to the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program and the Surface Transportation Program (STP), as well as any proposed growth in the Federal Transit Administration's formula programs above the current funding levels.
- Funds should flow to a single metropolitan planning organization in each metropolitan region.










METROPOLITAN MOBILITY: SETTING GOALS, ACHIEVING RESULTS (continued)

The Bay Area Embraces a Performance Based Approach

In January 2011, MTC, in partnership with the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) , set 10 bold performance targets for our next regional transportation plan, Plan Bay Area, slated for adoption in April 2013. The targets reflect a more comprehensive approach that will be taken in this plan, as a result of changes to state law which now requires the plan to incorporate greenhouse gas reduction targets and housing policy.

The 10 performance targets were chosen to ensure that the transportation and land use decisions made by local agencies help advance key regional goals, such as healthy and safe communities, economic vitality and equitable access. The performance targets for 2035 (compared to a 2005 base year) include:

1 Reduce per-capita carbon dioxide emissions from cars and light duty trucks by 15 percent

2 House 100 percent of the region's projected 25-year growth by income level without displacing current low-income residents

3 Reduce premature deaths from exposure to particulate emissions — 10 percent for fine particulates (PM 2.5) and 30 percent for coarse particulate emissions (PM 10)

— Achieve greater reductions in highly impacted areas

4 Reduce by 50 percent the number of injuries and fatalities from all collisions

5 Increase the average daily time walking or biking for transportation by 60 percent, for an average of 15 minutes per person per day

6 Direct all non-agricultural development within the urban footprint (existing urban development and urban growth boundaries)

7 Decrease by 10 percent the share of low-income and lower-middle income residents' household income consumed by transportation and housing

8 Increase gross regional product (GRP) by 90 percent — an average annual growth rate of approximately 2 percent (in current dollars)

9 Decrease by 10 percent vehicle miles traveled per capita and average per-trip travel time for non-auto modes

10 Maintain the transportation system in a state of good repair

Over the next two years, MTC and ABAG will develop various transportation investment and land-use scenarios to help assess which approach performs the best relative to the targets. Once the plan is adopted, we will periodically measure progress toward the performance targets to help guide future planning and investment decisions.

PAYING THE BILL: RESTORE THE USER FEE SYSTEM

We urge Congress to replace the current federal excise (per gallon) taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel with a fixed sales tax initially set on a revenue-neutral basis.

Despite favorable recommendations from a series of congressional and presidential commissions, resistance to raising fuel excise tax rates is long-standing, bipartisan and persistent whether fuel prices are high or low and whether the economy is booming or suffering a downturn. We need to break free of this revenue stalemate.

A New Approach: Sales Tax Conversion

One way out of the current downward spiral would be to convert the fuel excise taxes to a sales tax on fuel, initially on a revenue-neutral basis. The federal excise taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel are responsible for about 90 percent of the revenue deposited in the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), the main source of funding for the federal highway and transit program. The current excise tax rates of 18 cents per gallon on gasoline and 24 cents per gallon on diesel fuel have not been adjusted by Congress since 1993. Since then, these federal user fees have lost more than one-third of their purchasing power due to inflation and greater fuel efficiency (see chart below).

In order to generate equivalent revenue to the current federal excise tax, the sales tax rate would need to be about six percent (at a national average gasoline price of $3 per gallon).

This solution meets three critical tests:

- It does not raise taxes.
- It does not worsen the federal deficit.
- It closes the gap in the growing federal surface transportation program.

Congress can simultaneously address the immediate crisis in transportation funding and help reduce the nation's fiscal deficit.

Revenues from the federal fuel tax are no longer sufficient to meet the obligations of the HTF, and additional public funding is needed. Private capital can play a larger role in funding future transportation improvements, but much of the HTF's obligation involves rehabilitating the existing transportation system — an area unlikely to attract private dollars seeking a return on invested capital.

Transportation's Twin Crises

1. The HTF's revenue stream cannot meet current authorized levels and has become dependent on General Fund bailouts. Congress has transferred $35 billion from the General Fund in 2008 and 2009 to maintain the existing program through 2011.
2. Even current authorized levels are insufficient to maintain our infrastructure in good repair, let alone provide for modern improvements.

In recent years, two separate, bipartisan commissions examined this issue and concluded that it would be necessary to increase federal-highway user fees to generate the funds needed to maintain the federal highway network.[1]

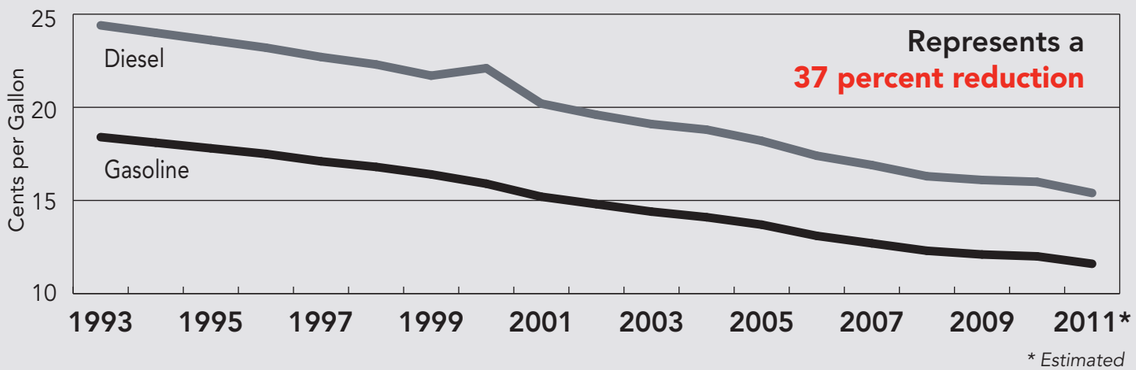
Both panels identified a higher gas tax — after evaluating 30 possible options — as the only plausible alternative for increasing revenues in the short term. Yet, Administration and Congressional resistance to this approach remains strong.

Fuel Sales Taxes Outpace Excise Taxes

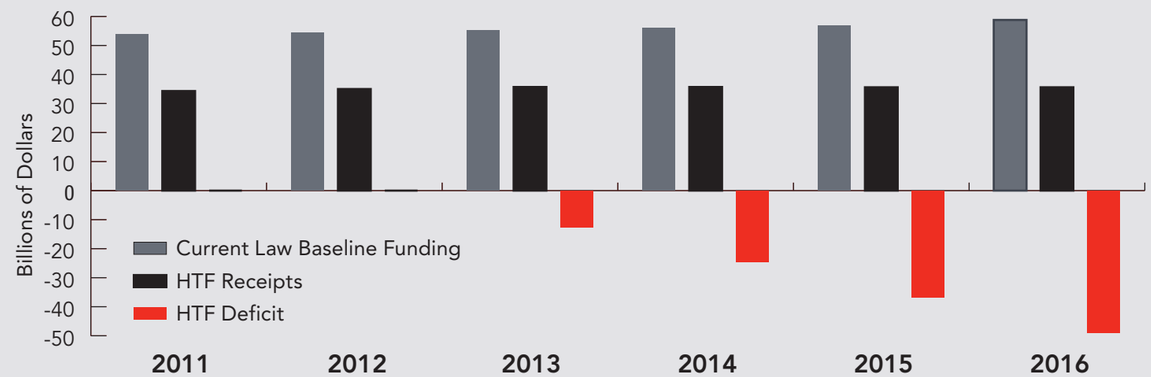
Evidence that a sales tax is a better approach can be found in California and Georgia.

- In California, from 2004 to 2009, annual revenues from its 5 percent sales tax on gasoline increased by 60 percent while revenues from its 18-cents-per-gallon excise tax dropped by 7 percent.
- In Georgia, from 2004 to 2009, annual revenues from sales tax on fuels increased by 78 percent, while excise tax revenue was virtually unchanged.

Gas/Diesel Excise Tax Purchasing Power, 1993–2011



Gap Between Baseline Funding and HTF Receipts



1 *Transportation for Tomorrow*, report issued in 2007 by the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission; and *Paying Our Way: A New Framework for Transportation Finance*, report issued in 2009 by the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission.










Addressing Fuel Price Volatility

Because the price of fuel can vary, Congress could establish a floor and a ceiling for funds generated by the sales tax to flow into the HTF.

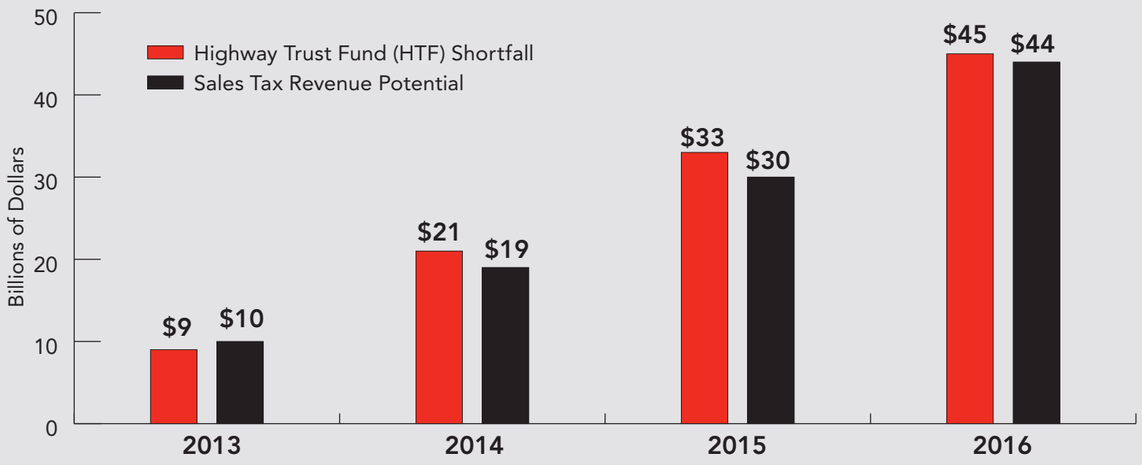
- A floor would be the authorized highway and transit funding levels, and would be guaranteed by limited infusions from the General Fund if necessary.
- A ceiling would establish an upper range for sales tax generations to the HTF in case of dramatic escalations in the price of fuel.

Amounts between the floor and ceiling could function similarly to revenue-aligned budget authority for transportation projects under current law. Amounts in excess of the ceiling would spill over into the General Fund to reduce the federal deficit. Accordingly, the General Fund would cover the downside price risk for the HTF, but would benefit from the upside price potential above the ceiling.

On a revenue-neutral basis in the first year, revenues are expected to be unchanged. As fuel prices increase according to U.S. Department of Energy forecasts over the next six years, cumulative revenues flowing into the HTF by 2016 would increase by $44 billion as compared to the current excise tax.

As shown in the chart below, the potential net new revenue that could be generated by a switch to a federal sales tax on motor fuels nearly closes the forecast HTF shortfall over the next five years.

Closing the Highway Trust Fund Gap, 2013–2016



Source: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

Like all policy proposals, the idea of replacing fuel excise taxes with a sales tax on fuel has both advantages and disadvantages. In this case, the former clearly outnumber the latter.

Advantages

- The principal advantage is that a sales tax is self-indexing and has the potential to end divisive debates on a needed baseline level of infrastructure funding that does not erode over time due to inflation.
- This proposal represents a funding source that will likely grow when world oil prices increase as China, India and other newly industrialized countries pressure the oil markets.
- Although the sales tax for excise tax swap is to be imposed on a revenue-neutral basis, popular perception will be that a single-digit sales tax is replacing an excise tax in the high teens and low twenties.
- Any General Fund support needed to meet the sales-tax "floor" could be repaid, and amounts over the HTF revenue "ceiling" could be used for General Fund deficit reduction.
- The existing federal excise taxes have low collection costs and low rates of evasion because they are imposed on relatively few taxpayers early in the fuel supply chain. Unlike a broad-based vehicle miles traveled (VMT) fee or other forms of road tolling, a sales tax on fuel could be imposed in the same way in order to hold down collection costs. Several states already impose a sales tax on fuels and have experience in this method of tax collection.

Photo: © Jason Todd/Getty Images

By shifting from a per-gallon tax to a sales tax on fuel, Congress can maintain the user-fee principle that has characterized federal transportation funding for generations.

Disadvantages

- Fuel prices are highly variable in the short term, and sales tax revenue will fall when prices decline and will rise when prices increase. The "floor" and "ceiling" mechanism described above can moderate these revenue swings.
- Revenue generated by a fuel sales tax is dependent on the amount of fuel purchased and would be negatively affected by improvements to fuel economy and reductions in driving due to gas price spikes. However, by comparison to the current excise tax, which loses value every year due to inflation, a fuel sales tax can better maintain its purchasing power over time.










HIGH-SPEED RAIL PICKS UP SPEED: SAN FRANCISCO/SILICON VALLEY CORRIDOR INVESTMENT STRATEGY

We urge Congress to approve the President's $8 billion request for high-speed rail in the fiscal year 2012 budget, and to support the Administration's proposed $53 billion multi-year high-speed rail program through fiscal year 2017.

While the current fiscal climate may give Congress pause, when it comes to investing in rail infrastructure, other nations are leaping ahead of the U.S. Through significant high-speed rail investment, Congress can help reverse this trend, create thousands of well-paying American jobs, and lay a foundation for the future prosperity of our nation and its metropolitan areas.

After more than a decade of planning, California's high-speed train system is now under construction. The $2.9 billion in federal funds to date comes on top of $10 billion approved by California voters in November 2008.

Top 50 City Pairs

Rank	City Pair	Score
1	New York-Washington	100.00
2	Philadelphia-Washington	98.24
3	Boston-New York	97.22
4	Baltimore-New York	96.83
5	Los Angeles-San Francisco	96.43
6	Boston-Philadelphia	96.05
7	Los Angeles-San Diego	94.92
8	Los Angeles-San Jose	94.19
9	Boston-Washington	92.79
10	Dallas-Houston	91.37
11	Chicago-Detroit	
12	Baltimore-Boston	
13	Chicago-Columbus	
14		

America 2050

Source: America 2050, "Where High Speed Rail Works Best," 2009

Civic and transportation leaders representing the San Francisco/Silicon Valley Corridor have joined together to prepare the historic Caltrain rail corridor along the San Francisco Peninsula for a new level of service appropriate for high-speed rail between San Francisco and Los Angeles/Anaheim.

NC3D

Transit-oriented developments are planned near the Diridon Station in San Jose.

The San Francisco/Silicon Valley Corridor

In response to recent federal funding opportunities, MTC coordinated development of the San Francisco/Silicon Valley Corridor Investment Strategy with key public agencies in the corridor. The Strategy performs well against all major criteria contained in the Obama Administration's Vision for High-Speed Rail released in April 2009.

Bay Area Connections in Top Ten

A 2009 study, "Where High-Speed Rail Works Best," found that connections between San Francisco and San Jose to Los Angeles ranked in the top ten of the best U.S. city pairs for high-speed rail (see list at left). The study evaluated nearly 30,000 city pairs to determine their suitability for high-speed rail investment on the basis of various criteria, including congestion, population and metropolitan gross domestic product.

Building the Peninsula Corridor in Phases

The strategy for achieving this vision calls for a phased approach to implementing a number of capital projects. Phase 1 has already begun, with construction of the underground-level train station and mezzanine for the Transbay Transit Center in San Francisco. This project has a total capital budget of $1.2 billion, including $400 in federal high-speed rail funds from ARRA.

NC3D

The new Transbay Transit Center in San Francisco will feature rooftop gardens.

> "Two sections of the alignment, namely San Francisco to San Jose and Los Angeles to Anaheim, ...offer great opportunity for phased implementation that can also bring benefits to existing services... We will be working with the local and regional agencies and the communities to incorporate a phased implementation approach into the project environmental documents."
>
> — Roelof van Ark, CEO
> California High-Speed Rail Authority,
> February 3, 2011

The next step is the construction of a federally required safety program called Positive Train Control. Estimated to cost $230 million, positive train control is a communications and signaling system that allows optimal performance along a corridor, while significantly reducing the possibility of accidents.

Future Phases

Next steps include electrifying the entire Caltrain corridor, building grade separations at key Peninsula locations and the first increment of the new Diridon Station in downtown San Jose.

In response to concerns raised by local residents, MTC is committed to working with all Peninsula interests to articulate specific improvements that bring quieter, faster and less polluting rail service while protecting the character of existing communities.

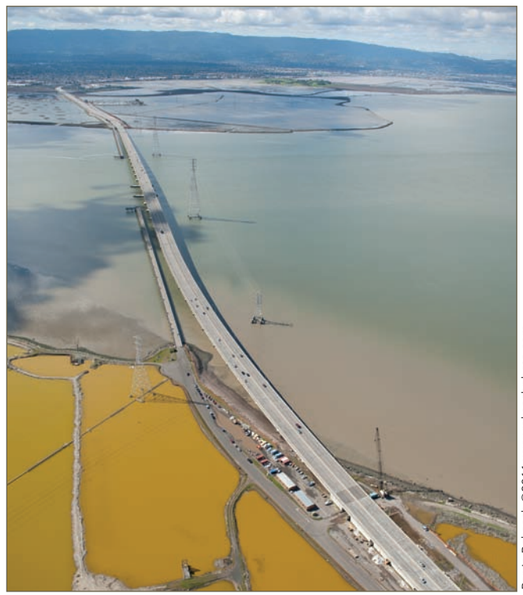
BAY AREA NEARS HOME STRETCH ON SEISMIC SAFETY PROGRAM

Huge strides were taken in 2010 toward completion of the $9 billion Toll Bridge Seismic Retrofit Program, overseen by the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) — MTC's sister agency — Caltrans and the California Transportation Commission. Most dramatic, the first three segments of the iconic 525-foot self-anchored suspension (SAS) tower of the new East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge were installed. In addition, the first 20 of 28 permanent deck sections were lifted into place.

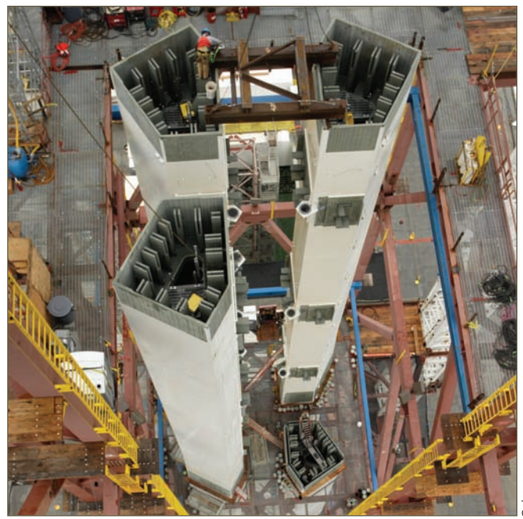
Thanks to the Legislature's 2009 passage of AB 1175 (Torlakson) allowing for an additional toll increase, construction work also began last year on retrofits of the Antioch and Dumbarton bridges. Because the 1.8-mile Antioch Bridge (built in 1978) and the 1.6-mile Dumbarton Bridge (1982) were comparatively new when the Toll Bridge Seismic Retrofit Program originally was established, neither was included in initial seismic studies. A two-year evaluation completed in 2008 by BATA and Caltrans revealed that both bridges need significant strengthening to protect public safety. The new toll schedule — which for the first time includes congestion pricing on the Bay Bridge — went into effect in July 2010.

Caltrans

Antioch Bridge piers fitted with construction scaffolding



Barrie Rokeach ©2011 www.rokeachphoto.com



Caltrans

While most of the seismic retrofit work on the Dumbarton Bridge (above) is below the deck, progress on the New East Span of the Bay Bridge has gone vertical with the installation of the new span's tower (below).

Because of the economic downturn, 2010 turned out to be a highly favorable bidding environment, with both new retrofit projects coming in significantly below engineers' estimates. The Antioch Bridge project is slated for completion in May 2012, and the Dumbarton retrofit is scheduled to wrap up in September 2013.

Replacement of the 2.2-mile Bay Bridge East Span remains on target for completion by December 2013. In addition to the SAS project—which, at 1,263 feet, will be the longest such bridge in the world — work is now underway on the Yerba Buena Island transition structures and the roughly 1,000-foot eastbound portion of the Oakland touchdown structure.

The westbound portion of the Oakland touchdown was completed in June 2010, while the twin bridges of the 1.2-mile Skyway section were completed in 2008. Construction highlights for 2011 will include completion of the SAS tower and installation of the remaining SAS roadway deck sections.

All eight of the other seismic retrofit projects — replacement of the Bay Bridge West Approach in San Francisco and retrofits of the Bay Bridge West Span, the 1962 Benicia-Martinez Bridge, the 1958 Carquinez Bridge, the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge and the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge, as well as the Vincent Thomas Bridge in Los Angeles and the San Diego-Coronado Bridge — have been completed.

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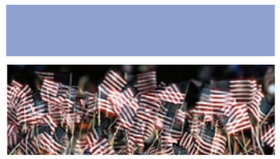
Progress on the construction of the New East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge





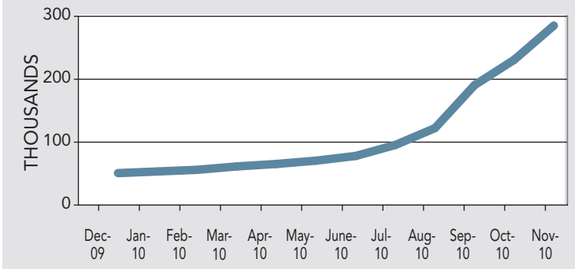


BAY AREA TRAVELERS EMBRACE HIGH-TECH ADVANTAGE

MTC and Transit Agencies Launch Clipper

2010 was a breakthrough year for the Bay Area's regional transit smart card, Clipper. Launched last June as part of a renaming from the TransLink® moniker in use since 2002, the distinctive blue and white cards proved to be an immediate hit, with average weekday boardings soaring from 60,000 at the time of the launch to more than 300,000 by year-end.

Number of Clipper Cards Used Per Month



MTC Archives

The Clipper card speeds up fare payment and eases the hassle of transfers between different transit systems.

The card gives travelers a seamless experience when paying for public transit on SFMTA, BART, AC Transit, Caltrain, Golden Gate Transit & Ferry, SamTrans and Santa Clara VTA. Together these operators carry more than 90 percent of all Bay Area transit passengers. Eventually, passengers will be able to use the Clipper card on all major Bay Area transit systems.

MTC Archives

Bay Area transit riders can use the 511 system to get real-time departure information for the next bus, train or streetcar.

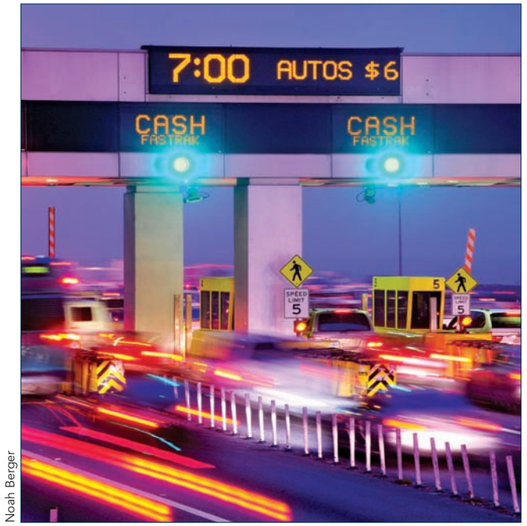
Bay Area 511: Mobility at the Leading Edge

MTC's award-winning 511 traveler information system generates more than 400,000 phone calls and over 2 million Web visits each month. With a range of features unequalled by 511 systems anywhere else, the Bay Area's multi-modal service expanded further into the mobile environment in 2010, making the whole suite of 511 services — from traffic conditions to transit routes, schedules and fares to carpooling and bicycling options — available on mobile devices at *m.511.org*.

Real-time transit departure predictions are now available for SFMTA, BART, AC Transit, WestCAT and (in early 2011) SamTrans, via the Web or by text message. A newly launched website provides 511 data for software developers designing new applications to help make 511 even more useful for Bay Area travelers.

Variable Tolls Promise Congestion Relief

In July 2010, congestion pricing debuted on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, courtesy of the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA), which is staffed and overseen by MTC. BATA's move was timed to coincide with a general toll increase on all state-owned bridges in the region. For all bridges except the Bay Bridge, automobile tolls were increased $1 to a uniform $5 toll level. On the Bay Bridge, however, drivers now pay a premium — $6 — to cross during peak commute periods on weekday mornings and afternoons. At other times Monday through Friday, the toll drops to $4, sending a signal to drivers that it pays to delay their trips to the off-peak or try transit. On weekends, a flat $5 toll is in force.



Noah Berger

A sign above the toll booths at the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge clearly displays "$6" — the toll now in effect during weekday morning and afternoon commute periods on this bridge.

Noah Berger

Tolls charged during the morning commute on the I-680 Express Lane range from $1 to $7.50, depending on the level of congestion.

Congestion pricing is also the operating principle behind the region's first express lane, opened in September 2010 by the Alameda County Transportation Commission on a 14-mile stretch of southbound Interstate 680 along the Sunol Grade. On weekdays between the hours of 5 A.M. and 8 P.M., solo drivers can now choose to avoid congestion along this route by paying a variable toll (via FasTrak®) to use the carpool lane. The toll is higher when traffic is heavy, and lower when it is light; carpools always travel free in the I-680 express lane. More express lanes are coming to the Bay Area in 2011, and MTC is planning a network comprising 500 miles of express lanes over the next 20 years.




BAY AREA PARTNERSHIP

The Bay Area Partnership Board is a coalition of the top staff of various regional transportation agencies and environmental protection agencies. The Partnership provides a forum for discussion of key transportation issues facing the region in order to improve the overall efficiency and operation of the Bay Area's transportation network.

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